

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Remarks at Wolfspeed, Inc., Headquarters in Durham, North Carolina**  
*March 28, 2023*

Hello, everyone. How are you? Well, it's great to be here.

*Shooting in Nashville, Tennessee*

Before I begin to talk about the whole notion of rebuilding America, I want to talk very briefly about what happened in Nashville.

You know, we know the names of the victims. We've seen the initial footage of the attack.

Three children—three children dead, all just 9 years old, including the daughter of the pastor. Three members of the staff: the school custodian, a substitute teacher, and the head of school.

I spoke with one of the—like, actually, it was the Governor's wife—the Governor—he was telling me his wife was about to have dinner that night with her.

There is still more to learn about what happened, but there's plenty we do know. We know that this family's worst nightmare—a family's worst nightmare has occurred. I've lost a child not to that; I've lost a child to an accident and to a cancer. But I'll tell you, there's nothing like losing a child. Particularly, the more senseless it is, the more devastating the impact on you. It's absolutely heartbreaking. And it's senseless.

You know, those children should all be with us still.

By the way, have a seat, if you have one. *[Laughter]*

They should still be with us. As a nation—this is not hyperbole—as a nation, we owe these families more than our prayers. We owe them action.

You know, we have to do more to stop this gun violence—of ripping communities apart and ripping apart the soul of this Nation; to protect our children so they learn how to read and write instead of duck and cover in the classroom. You know, we need to act. These are weapons of war.

I'm a Second Amendment guy. I have two shotguns. My sons have shotguns. You know, but our States—you know, everybody thinks somehow the Second Amendment is absolute. You're not allowed to go out and own an automatic weapon. You're not allowed to own a machinegun. You're not allowed to own a flamethrower. You're not allowed to own so many other things.

Why in God's name do we allow these weapons of war in our streets and at our schools?

According to law enforcement, the shooter in this horror had two assault weapons and a pistol. And—what in God's name are we doing? These guns are the number—gun—this is hard to believe. I never thought when I started my public life that guns would be the number-one killer of children in America. Guns: number one. It's sick.

And overwhelmingly, a majority of gun owners agree: We have to do something. Not just everybody; the gun owners agree. This—there's a moral price to pay for inaction.

Last year, we came together to pass the most significant gun safety legislation in 30 years. It was bipartisan. We got it done. And don't tell me we can't do more together.

So I again call on Congress to pass the assault weapons ban. Pass it. It should not be a partisan issue. This is a commonsense issue. We have to act now. And people say, why do I keep

saying this if it's not happening? Because I want you to know who isn't doing it, who isn't helping, to put pressure on them.

You know, I know you see on television—it's not just merely the weapon in terms of its—that it's semiautomatic, in effect, but the velocity with which it comes out of that muzzle, what it does when it hits the body. Most bullets would go just straight through and out, leaving—but it blows up once it's inside your body. What in God's name—what in God's name—does anyone need that for in America?

### *Manufacturing Industry Promotion Efforts*

Folks, look, let me come to—speak to what I came to talk about.

I want to thank Jake for the introduction. And, Mayor Elaine O'Neal, thank you for the passport into the city.

And, Governor Cooper, thanks for inviting me back to North Carolina. Now, see, he should know better, but he's invited me back. *[Laughter]* We've been doing this a lot. Where is the Gov? There he is.

By the way, if you had to name the five best Governors of either party in the United States of America, this guy is one of them. You really are. And you know why? You all know it, whether you're Democrat or Republican, liberal or conservative. He has more integrity in his little finger than most people have in their whole body. What he says, you can count on. And he's completely, completely, completely straight.

We're also committed to this State. You've—you're here on your wedding anniversary. And I just want you to know I sent flowers to your wife. I don't know about you. *[Laughter]* You'd better damn well be in time for that dinner. He has dinner later tonight. I'm not going to tell you the time because you may want to go to the same restaurant. *[Laughter]* But the fact is that I promise I'm not going to speak till 6:30. That's when the dinner is.

Gov, thanks for being here today, but thanks for your friendship.

And you have two great freshmen Members of Congress: Representative Valerie Foushee. Valerie, where are you sitting? There you are, Valerie. And Representative Wiley Nickel. Wiley, stand up, man. They're fighting hard for the people of North Carolina.

And Secretary Gina Raimondo, former Governor, is doing an incredible job—an incredible job—as a Cabinet member with me. And she is implementing the laws we've just passed and we're making that is going to change this country.

And Wolfspeed CEO Gregg Lowe. Gregg? Gregg's over there. There you go, Gregg.

I was doing some photos, and a guy walked through the line. He said, "Last time you were here, you were here for lightbulbs." *[Laughter]* Hell of a lot more than lightbulbs now. *[Laughter]*

Anyway, thanks for partnering with Governor Cooper on this historic investment. And this is the largest investment in manufacturing in the history of North Carolina.

I asked—I've asked CEOs this question repeatedly since we've begun passing this legislation: When the United States invests considerable resources in new industry, does it encourage businesses to get in the game or discourage them? And the answer is universal: It encourages business to get in the game.

Federal investment attracts private sector investment. It creates jobs and industries, and it demonstrates we're all in this together. And that's what today is about.

We're here to talk about what we're doing to invest in America, to invest in North Carolina and the progress we've made building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up, not trickle down from the top down. That never landed on my dad's kitchen table, the trickle-down piece. Progress we've made creating strong, sustainable economic growth.

We passed the American Rescue Plan right after I was elected, the most aggressive economic recovery package since Franklin Roosevelt. We passed the bipartisan infrastructure law, the most substantial investment since President Eisenhower's investment in infrastructure: roads, bridges, ports, airports, clean water, high-speed internet. And we passed the CHIPS and Science Act, the most significant investment in manufacturing and research and development in our history.

We used to invest 2 percent of our GDP in research and development. The last 35 years, it got down to .7 percent. But America's coming back. We're determined to lead the world in manufacturing of semiconductors. We invented semiconductors in the United States of America.

The Inflation Reduction Act is the most transformal—the transformational investment in our climate ever anywhere in the world.

Put it all together, it's a plan to invest in America, invest in Americans, give them opportunity, invest in ourselves. And it's working.

Here's what it looks like across the country: a record 12.4 million new jobs, including 800,000 manufacturing jobs. That means we've recovered every single job lost in the pandemic and created 3 million more.

Instead of exporting jobs—[*applause*]. Instead of exporting jobs, like—to get cheaper labor costs—like, I come from the corporate capital of the world, Delaware. More corporations are incorporated in Delaware than every other State in the union combined.

About 30 years ago, under Democrat and Republican administrations, corporate America decided to go where the jobs are the cheapest. And guess what? America lost its edge in manufacturing, lost its edge across the board. And we did that for decades.

Now we're creating jobs. We're exporting jobs no longer. American products are being made here. We're growing the economy. And today I announced that since I took office, we've attracted—catch this—we've attracted 435 billion—billion—dollars in private investment in American manufacturing.

We announced over 23,000 infrastructure jobs so far—projects so far—not jobs, projects—in thousands of American communities across the country. And, in the process, we're strengthening our supply chain.

Right here in America, here in North Carolina, we're making chips that go into electric vehicles. These vehicles are powered by batteries and critical minerals that we're making—you're making here in North Carolina. We're making electric vehicles here in North Carolina. That's what "invest" means when we say, "Invest in America."

Before the pandemic, "supply chain" wasn't something most Americans thought about. When you'd say "the supply chains," you'd look at each other with a blank stare. Well, guess what? Everybody knows what the supply chain is because the day—today, after delays in parts and products folks experienced, everyone knows that's why it's so important; you have to have access to them.

My economic plan brings the supply chain home, to the United States. I was asked by one foreign leader, who will remain nameless, why I was doing this. I said we're no longer going to be—have to wait for product from other countries.

We're going to—you're going to have access to what we do, but we're going to have the supply chain start in America, building a clean energy future made in America.

And that means providing incentives for companies to manufacture clean energy technology here in North Carolina and across the country, where companies are making electric vehicles because of our investments; in Charlotte, where, you know, Albemarle is using funding from the bipartisan infrastructure act to process lithium and critical materials that power EV batteries.

Across the State—across the State, we're building a network of electric vehicle charging stations, and we're going to build 550,000 of them across all of America, where, driving up and down the coast or on I-85, charging stations will be as easy to find as gas stations are today. And that's a promise.

And Wolfspeed is making an investment that will further strengthen the supply chain, the largest investment in manufacturing in North Carolina history: \$5 billion they're investing.

They make the wafers needed to produce semiconductors, these small computer chips—smaller than the end of your little finger—that power everyday lives. Everything. Smartphones, washing machines, hospital equipment, automobiles, you name it. They're especially critical in powering electric vehicles, which can use 2- to 3,000 chips for a single vehicle.

And building their construction and—and building and the construction—whether it's the size—this building they're constructing will be the size of 38 football fields. Let me say that again: What they're constructing is the size of 38 football fields. It will have 10 times the productive capacity compared to where we're standing on today—38 football fields.

Next door to Chatham County, VinFast is investing \$4 billion to produce electric vehicles, which will use the semiconductors Wolfspeed produces. Think about this—what it means to our supply chain and to our communities. Instead of relying on minerals made overseas in places like China, the supply chain will be here in America, here in North Carolina. This is a gamechanger.

And by the way, America invented these chips. We invented them. We were the guys that came up with it because of the space program.

Federal investment helped reduce the cost of creating and marketing the entire industry that America led. As a result, over 30 years ago, America had 40 percent of the global chip production. And then we got fat and happy. Something happened. American manufacturing, the backbone of our economy, got hollowed out. Companies began moving, as I said, jobs overseas instead of products overseas.

As a result, today we're down to producing around 10 percent of the world's chips, despite leading the world in research and design of new chip technology.

Why does this matter? Well, we saw it during the pandemic. When the global economy came to a halt, overseas factories that make these chips shut down, driving up costs for families.

In fact, one-third of the core inflation rate in 2021 was because of the price of automobiles. They couldn't get enough computer chips, so they started to shut down the lines. Fewer cars were made. Workers on the shop floor were laid off. Prices went up because the cars were in short supply.

Now—now—we're turning things around in a big way. Folks, where is it written—where is it written—that says that America can't lead the world in manufacturing again? Where the hell is that written? I don't know that. *[Laughter]* No, I'm serious. Think about it. Think about it.

All over the country, semiconductor companies are investing hundreds of billions of dollars in a record amount of money to bring chip production back home in Ohio, New York, Arizona—not just here.

We're bringing the key parts of the supply chain back to America. Companies in every part of the country are expanding factories and building new ones, creating tens of thousands—tens of thousands—of new, good-paying jobs, which don't need a 4-year degree. Don't need a 4-year degree.

Folks, when I say every job in America should be a good job, including a free and fair choice to join a union, I mean it. Every venture to manufacture—every venture to manufacture electric vehicles—electric vehicles' batteries would be made stronger by collective bargaining relationships with unions.

Look, we're working to ensure a clean energy manufacturing future is also—supports the American working family and good union jobs.

And by the way, everybody thinks, you want to be an electrician, you show up and you say, "I want to be an electrician." You go to a 4- or 5-year apprenticeship. It's like going back to school. You don't get the pay until you are qualified fully. It takes 4 to 5 years of training. That's why they're the best workers in the world.

I asked the South Korean chip manufacturing company why they're moving billions of dollars to the United States to build factories here. He said, "Because"—swear to God—he said, "Because you have the best workers in the world and the safest place in the world to build them."

Listen, I know many of you here in North Carolina and many of you watching at home, like—like the folks I grew up with in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and Claymont, Delaware—you feel left out, left behind in an economy that's rapidly changing. I get it.

But hear me: We will leave no one behind in this new ventures. We're going to make sure all American workers, with college degrees or without college degrees, are prepared to compete with anyone else in the world.

We're working with companies and community colleges, technical schools, union-led registered apprentice and training program to make that happen. In fact, Wolfspeed is partnering with North Carolina Community College and North Carolina A&T, an HBCU that produces more Black engineers than anywhere in the country, to train workers and build that pipeline to fill the jobs we're creating.

And partnerships with HBCUs like North Carolina A&T and North Carolina Central University here in Durham, the community colleges across the State, they're going receive \$60 million in American Rescue Plan funding to create new pipelines for good-paying jobs in biotech, manufacturing, cybersecurity, and shipbuilding.

The top private sector companies have committed to hire at least 3,000 North Carolinians from a new clean job [jobs; White House correction] training pipeline funded by the American Rescue Plan.

Wolfspeed—Wolfspeed investment alone is going to lead to 1,800 North Carolina jobs, the vast majority of which won't require a college degree. And guess what? The average pay for those non-college graduates will be \$80,000 a year. That's almost double the average annual wage of Chatham County in the new—where the new plant is going to be built.

It's not just clean energy manufacturing. Next door in Pittsboro, the town getting \$18 million to keep contaminants out of their drinking water. Northeastern North Carolina—Alligator River Bridge connecting I-95 and the Outer Banks will be replaced with a modern bridge so folks headed to the beach don't face the frustrating delays and detours.

Talk to one of the seventy hundred—700,000 North Carolinian families who are able to afford high-speed internet because of our infrastructure law. We put it in, and it's available. No

more having to pull up to a parking lot outside a McDonald's to have to turn on the internet so your kid can do their homework when they're doing it online.

And by the way, just yesterday North Carolina, because of your Governor and State legislature, became the fourth—40th State to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act—[*applause*]*—the fourth since I took office, including funding from the American Rescue Plan.*

Six hundred thousand North Carolinians are about to qualify for high-quality health care—actually can afford it now for the first time in their lives. So thank you, Gov. It's a gigantic deal. It really is. It's a big deal.

Folks, this matters. But thanks to Governor Cooper's leadership putting these Federal dollars to work, people are starting to feel the effects of—in their everyday lives.

And these investments, what they mean now—by the way, one thing that's not part of the infrastructure bill, but is sort of health infrastructure: We finally, after years and years, were able to take on Big Pharma.

Any of you who know anybody who has to—who has type 1 diabetes or type 2 diabetes? Raise your hand if you know anybody. Well, guess what? You've been paying 4- to 500 dollars a vial for that insulin you need to stay alive. Well, guess what? Now they cannot charge you more than 35 bucks. Thirty-five bucks. Because it costs them only \$10 to make.

And, folks, that's not all. You know, a lot of people, particularly those on Medicare, they have health care bills that are—insurance bills for their insurance that is incredibly high. So—for drugs. So, for example, you need a—if you have a serious cancer problem, you can be paying 13-, 14,000 dollars a year. Under the new law, no one is going to have to pay more than 200—\$2,000 a year for their health care, period.

And guess what? In the process, I'm cutting the Federal budget \$168 billion. You know why? Because Medicare doesn't have to pay out those exorbitant, undeserved fees. They'll pay out what they—it's worth.

So, folks, this not only helps patients, but it helps the economy. All these investments mean that now, if you grow up in North Carolina, and you go to school in North Carolina, you can stay in North Carolina and—with a good job, and you can raise a family on it.

How many of you before had, in small towns in North Carolina, a—someone goes out and gets a decent education, and the son or daughter comes in: "Mom, I can't stay here. There's no jobs for me. I've got to leave." Well, you're going to be able to stay. You're going to be able to stay.

And none of this is happening by accident. And it's not just happening in North Carolina. It's all part of my agenda to invest in America. American jobs. American innovation. Pride in our country. Dignity for workers and their families.

But unfortunately, extreme MAGA Republicans—not all—but extreme MAGA Republicans are threatening to undo all this progress. They're putting our economy in jeopardy by threatening to refuse to pay America's bills, not the ones—I cut the deficit by \$1.7 trillion in 2 years. But guess what? They're talking about not paying our debt, which is accumulated over 200 years. All this—when you hear these trillion-dollar numbers, that's 200 years of debt accumulated. Two hundred years.

And they want to repeal the Inflation Reduction Act, which means they want to cut the investments in clean energy manufacturing and encourage companies to expand and create jobs instead of—create jobs here. They want to cede our clean energy future to China to make us

dependent on overseas supplies and supply chains, export jobs overseas, and weaken our energy security.

MAGA Republicans in Congress, all—they want to cut—gut the CHIPS and Science Act, stripping our investments in the next-generation science and technology, like biomanufacturing, quantum computing, and molecular electronics [microelectronics; White House correction]. Look, folks, it would mean ceding the future of innovation and technology to China.

I've got news for you and for MAGA Republicans who are in the Congress: Not on my watch. We're not going to let them undo all the progress we've made. There's a number of Republicans that feel the same way.

I'm—let me close with this. I've been determined to make things in this country again, to build American manufacturing capacity, to make sure we're never again in a position like we were during the pandemic, where we're relying on other countries to make things that we need at home to make anything.

Folks, some folks didn't believe we could do it, but I've made it no—made no bones about it. I've said for a long time, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart: If we invest in America, we can change the country's future.

Thirty years ago—I'll say it again—we invested 2 percent of our entire GDP in research and development. By the time I came to office, that was under 10 percent. If I'm not mistaken, it was seven-tenths of 1 percent [0.7 percent; White House correction].

We're turning that around. We're proving it's never been a good bet to bet against America. I've never been more optimistic about our country's future. We just need to remember who we are. We're the United States of America. There is nothing—nothing—beyond our capacity when we act together. Virtually nothing.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:49 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to students Evelyn Dieckhaus, Hallie Scruggs, and William Kinney, custodian Mike Hill, substitute teacher Cynthia Peak, and head of school Katherine Koonce, who were killed in the shooting at the Covenant School in Nashville, TN, on March 27; Chad Scruggs, lead pastor, Covenant Presbyterian Church; Gov. William B. Lee of Tennessee and his wife Maria; Audrey E. Hale, the suspected perpetrator in the shooting at the Covenant School; Jake Ditzenberger, ironworker and member of the Ironworkers Union Local 848; Kristin Cooper, wife of Gov. Roy A. Cooper III of North Carolina; and Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo, in her former capacity as Governor of Rhode Island.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Wolfspeed, Inc., headquarters in Durham, NC.

*Locations:* Durham, NC.

*Names:* Biden, R. Hunter; Cooper, Kristin; Cooper, Roy A., III; Dieckhaus, Evelyn; Ditzenberger, Jake; Foushee, Valerie; Hale, Audrey E.; Hill, Mike; Kinney, William; Koonce, Katherine; Lee, Maria; Lee, William B.; Lowe, Gregg A.; Nickel, George W. "Wiley," III; O'Neal, Elaine M.; Peak, Cynthia; Raimondo, Gina M.; Scruggs, Chad; Scruggs, Hallie.

*Subjects:* Apprenticeship programs and job training; Broadband and wireless technologies; COVID-19 pandemic; Diabetes; Economic stimulus legislation; Electric and hybrid vehicles, promotion efforts; Electric vehicle charging infrastructure, improvement efforts; Federal deficit and debt; Firearm rights; Global supply chain disruptions, efforts to address; Gun control efforts; Gun violence, prevention efforts; Health insurance, access and affordability; Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs); Inflation; Infrastructure improvements; Insulin cost controls;

Job creation and growth; Labor movement and organized labor; Manufacturing industry, domestic investment; Medicare and Medicaid programs; North Carolina, Governor; North Carolina, President's visit; North Carolina, Wolfspeed, Inc., headquarters in Durham; Renewable energy sources and technologies; Research and development; Secretary of Commerce; Semiconductor manufacturing; Tennessee, Governor; Tennessee, shooting in Nashville.

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